
Environmental Fact Sheet



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10

October 1999

1999 Evergreen Award For Pollution Prevention

Tommie's Cleaners

Tillamook, Oregon

*The Environmental Protection Agency's 1999 Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention honors the environmental efforts of **Tommie's Cleaners of Tillamook, Oregon**, whose commitment to safeguarding Oregon's land, water and air resources makes the company a deserving recipient of this recognition.*

Pollution Prevention Success

As the only dry cleaner in Tillamook County, owner Priscilla Thompson made a significant financial investment in Tommies' Cleaners by installing a "dry petroleum" cleaning machine. Not only does the new technology replace a perchlorethylene (perc) machine and a old Stoddard transfer-style machine, it also completely eliminates perc usage, thereby reducing associated hazardous wastes.

New developments in petroleum-based dry cleaning have yielded a less-flammable cleaning solvent used in a specially designed closed-loop cleaning machine; solid, air and water wastes from this system are much less hazardous than perchloroethylene wastes. Small amounts of wastewater are evaporated in the system and released as steam.

Ms. Thompson continued her environmental stewardship during the necessary remodeling of her shop while installing the new system. The shop reused about 50% of the material from the old shop, recycling wood and other materials as much as possible—even reusing windows from another construction site! Leftover construction wastes were then taken to a recycling facility rather than the landfill.

Commitment to Environmental Quality

"It's the right thing to do" is the reason Ms. Thompson gives as to why she has invested so much in her cleaning business to protect the environment. Tommie's Cleaners does not advertise its new environmentally friendly system, relying instead on word-of-mouth interactions with her customers.

Environmental Leadership

Ms. Thompson is unique when it comes to environmental leadership.

"Tommie's Cleaners" has been in business for over 60 years, using first a Stoddard-solvent drycleaning system, and installing a perchloroethylene system in the late 1970s. After purchasing the shop from a family member and owning the shop for less than 10 years, Ms. Thompson had an old underground Stoddard-solvent tank removed from the Tommie's property when it was discovered that the soil was contaminated with both petroleum and perchlorethylene.

Ms. Thompson was concerned enough about her responsibility as a dry cleaner that in 1995 she volunteered for the newly-formed State Dry Cleaners Advisory Committee, a role she maintains today. Tasked by the State Legislature to assist the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to develop a cleanup and prevention program for dry cleaning facilities, the Committee finds its members among citizens, industry members, local governments and dry cleaning owner/operators.

Working with the ODEQ, Ms. Thompson decided to invest in the new dry cleaning technology for her shop. Although not a priority cleanup by ODEQ standards, Ms. Thompson has applied to the State's cleanup program to address her property's residual soil contamination.

By choosing to openly work with the regulators in order to improve the quality of the local environment, Ms. Thompson's dedication to do "the right thing" is a enduring example to others in the dry cleaning industry.

For more information about the environmental achievements of Tommie's Cleaners, contact Ms. Priscilla Thompson at (503) 842-2301.

The Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention

EPA's *Evergreen Award* recognizes outstanding pollution prevention efforts within all sectors of the greater Pacific Northwest business community.

For more information about EPA Region 10's
Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention, contact:

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